DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 310 525 EA 021 246

TITLE	Report of the Consensus Planning Project.
INSTITUTION	Council of Chief State School Officers, Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY	National Center for Education Statistics (ED), Washington, DC.; National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Aug 88
GRANT	SPA-1549
NOTE	64p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; *Cooperative Planning; *Coordination; *Educational Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; *Planning Commissions; Policy Formation; Statewide Planning
IDENTIFIERS	*National Assessment of Educational Progress; *National Assessment Planning Project

ABSTRACT

This third report of the National Assessment Planning Project concentrates on the consensus planning process used in the project. The project is an outgrowth of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) program expansion, whose original task was to produce state-by-state comparisons of student achievement. The report is organized in four sections, preceded by an introduction. The first section provides background information on the NAEP and on the National Assessment Planning Project itself. The second section is a discussion of how the demands placed upon the planning of the assessment shift as the project changes to a state-by-state program from a national program. The third section describes the consensus planning procedures used in the project. Finally, the fourth section presents recommendations, observations, and lessons learned from the project. (JAM)

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REPORT OF THE CONSENSUS PLANNING PROCESS

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AUGUST, 1988

EA 021 246

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The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nationwide non-profit organization of the 56 public officials who head departments of public education in every state, U.S. Territory, and the District of Columbia. CCSSO seeks its members' consensus on major education issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, to federal agencies, and to Congress, responds to a broad range of concerns about education, and provides leadership on major education issues.

Because the Council represents the chief education administrator in each state and territory, it has access to the educational and governmental establishments in each state and the national influence that accompanies this unique position. CCSSO forms coalitions with many other educational organizations and is able to provide leadership for a variety of policy concerns that affect elementary and secondary education. Thus, CCSSO members are able to act cooperatively on matters vital to the education of America's young people.

The State Education Assessment Center was founded by CCSSO in 1985 to provide a locus for leadership by the states to improve the monitoring and assessment of education. This is a report of the Assessment Center's National Assessment Planning Project.

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NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANNING PROJECT

The National Assessment Planning Project, under the auspices of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), was created by a consortium of eighteen national organizations interested in education and in exploring the feasibility of expanding the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in order to produce state-by-state comparisons of student achievement.

The project is governed by a Steering Committee. Each member was appointed on the recommendation of an organization in the consortium. This publication was conveyed to the Department of Eduction (ED) and to the National Assessment of Educational Progress on the review and approval of the Steering Committee. The publication, however, does not necessarily reflect the views of each of the associations in the consortium.

The project was supported by Grant No. SPA-1549 from the National Science Foundation (NSF) with funds partly from NSF and partly from the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education through an inter-governmental transfer from NCES to NSF. This publication, however, does not necessarily reflect the views of either agency. The interest of the two agencies in this project and their willingness to provide joint support is greatly appreciated. The support of NCES and NSF made possible this unique and vital step in the process of making NAEP more useful for policymaking at the state and local level.

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REFERENCES

APPENDIX A	Reading Objectives, 1987; National Assessment of Educational Progress
APPENDIX B	Civics: United States Government and Politics Objectives, 1988; National Assessment of Educational Progress
APPENDIX C	Public Law 98-511, Section 405 (e)
APPENDIX D	Public Law 100-297, Section 3403
APPENDIX E	Consensus Process Schedules; National Assessment Planning Project

I. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Interest in state level comparisons is rising in many quarters in the belief that better state-comparative information about student achievement than is currently available would facilitate the improvement of education in the individual states. In 1984 a majority of CCSSO members supported the development of a system of student assessment that would provide state comparisons[1], and in 1985, the members endorsed the expansion of NAEP as the most feasible way of providing these comparisons. During the 1986 national assessment, two individual states, Wyoming and Georgia, contracted with NAEP to conduct in-state, concurrent assessments and to provide state-to-nation comparisons. Also in 1986 and in 1987, groups of southern states, in a project coordinated by the Southern Regional Education Board, contracted with NAEP to conduct state-level assessments[2]. They were provided reports comparing achievement among those states. Some of the rising interest can be attributed to governors. A 1987 report from the National Governors' Association entitled Results in Education presented a number of comparative education indicators and displayed a blank column for achievement, clearly expressing the intent to fill that column in future years with achievement data[3]. In a 1987 report, a national group appointed by Secretary of Education William Bennett and chaired by former Governor of Tennessee Lamar Alexander made a series of recommendations on the future of NAEP[4]. A major recommendation was that NAEP should be expanded to provide state-by-state comparisons.

This rising interest is not without its critics. Some are worried that Federal, state, and local policymakers may misuse the data, making inappropriate inferences and drawing unwarranted cause-and-effect conclusions. Fears are expressed that the test will be very influential, and, with that influence, foster a national curriculum. Still others fear that the compromises that might be made on objectives will result in an assessment that measures the least common denominator and discourages badly needed curriculum reform.

Designing a national assessment that would not only be constructive but also minimize potential disadvantages is the purpose of this National Assessment Planning Project. The project has made recommendations that answer two questions of major interest to state and local educators and policymakers, who have been asked for the first time whether they want a report card for their state.

They will likely want to know what mathematics objectives (knowledge, skills) the assessment will measure and whether the objectives are more or less compatible with what they believe the schools in their states are trying to teach or believe should be taught. The topic of a separate publication is the mathematics objectives for the 1990 math assessment[5]. That report describes the basis for the development of test item specifications and for items on the 1990 math assessment.

They will also want to know how the achievement data on students in a state will be reported. A second report makes recommendations on how state achievement data from the 1990 math assessment should be measured and reported by NAEP, how comparisons should be reported, and on several policy issues related to conducting state-level assessments[6].

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This is the third report of the National Assessment Planning Project. It is the report of the consensus planning process used in the Project. During 1987-88, the National

Assessment Planning Project was conducted by a consortium of eighteen organizations brought together by the Council of Chief State School Officers. The project used consensus planning procedures to arrive at its recommendations. This report is on the consensus procedures used, and it makes recommendations to the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics and to the NAEP grantee on conducting consensus planning in the future for the National Assessment.

This report is organized in four sections. The first section is background information on the National Assessment of Educational Progress and on the planning project. The second section is a discussion of how the demands placed upon the planning of the assessment shift as it changes to a state-by-state program from a national program. The third section describes the consensus planning procedures used in the project. Finally, the fourth section presents recommendations, observations, and lessons learned from the project.

II. NAEP BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1960's, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has administered tests to a representative national sample of 9, 13, and 17 year old students and issued reports of what children know and can do in reading, mathematics, writing, science, and other subjects. The assessments have been based on a sample of 25,000 students at each age level, enough to provide data that are reliable on a national and broad regional basis. The sample, however, has not been large enough to provide measures of student performance at the state level, measures that would allow state-by-state comparisons.

There was little interest in comparing student performance in one state to another. That has changed dramatically in the last few years, as states have been asked to assume more responsibility for education and as the need for information to monitor education has increased.

As described above, the states, represented by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), adopted a policy that would provide for state-to-state achievement comparisons, and several states individually and collectively have already moved toward using NAEP for assessing and comparing their schools' performance. In 1987 the U.S. Department of Education awarded a grant for the operation of NAEP until 1990 to the Educational Testing Service which included the possibility that some part of the 1990 assessment test a large enough sample of students in each state to provide state level data--or at least in those states that want to be assessed. This spring, Congress re-authorized NAEP with new provisions for state-by-state assessment on a pilot basis in the 1990 and 1992 NAEP cycles.

What also has changed is the need for NAEP to be sensitive to the curriculum objectives of the individual states and school districts as it becomes a state-level assessment. In the past, that has not been crucial; the assessment could reflect a general, national consensus. If, however, education leaders in a particular state are faced with the decision of whether to participate in a state-comparative assessment they need assurance that the knowledge and skills that the assessment measures are compatible with the knowledge and skills they are attempting to teach to their students, or at least, the knowledge and skills that the leaders believe should be taught. They will also want to know how the data will be analyzed and reported. A Single number only showing that students in

a state with a high proportion of low-income families do not perform as well as states with more affluent students is hardly enlightening. Other variables that are included in the analysis, and the formats for reporting data, will be very important if the state-to-state comparisons are to be constructive and fair.

It is around these issues--the knowledge and skills that should be assessed and the method of analyzing and reporting state-level data--that the consensus planning process used in the National Assessment Planning Project was designed. Recommendations on the content of the assessment and on the methods for analyzing and reporting results were to be produced through a "consensus process" that was sensitive to the interests and concerns of the states and local districts and of various other constituents. What can be said about the consensus procedures used in that process--their strengths and weaknesses and the lessons that can be learned from the experience for procedures used in the future?

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

The legislation previously authorizing NAEP as a national testing program required a consensus planning process for its design: "Each learning area assessment shall have goal statements devised through a national consensus approach, providing for active participation of teachers, curriculum specialists, subject matter specialists, local school administrators, parents, and members of the general public ..." (Public Law 98-511, Section 405(e))

A virtually identical provision is included in the new law re-authorizing NAEP and expanding it to a state-by-state program: "Each learning area assessment shall have goal statements devised through a national consensus approach providing for active participation of teachers, curriculum specialists, local school administrators, parents and concerned members of the general public ..." (Public Law 100-297, Section 3403)

(Copies of these laws are included in Appendices C and D)

The participatory process that was affirmed as the principle for arriving at consensus in the past becomes all the more crucial as uses of NAEP for comparisons and policymaking are expanded, and as various state and local constituencies develop a greater stake in the results.

CONSENSUS PLANNING PROCESS USED BY NAEP

Within the constraints of available resources, the NAEP grantee has attempted to use a planning process designed to yield a national consensus on the goals and objectives for each assessment which is faithful to the intent of the legislation. For each subject-area assessment, one or more grantee's staff have been designated as responsible for carrying out this consensus planning process. With the approval of the project's Assessment Policy Committee (APC), staff have formed Learning Area Committees to develop the objectives for the assessment. Consisting usually of 7-9 members, these committees have been constituted to include:

- university-based specialists in the teaching or learning of the subject;
- national, state, or local curriculum specialists in the subject;
- prominent teachers of the subject;
- local school administrators, generally selected because of some professional experience and interest in the subject;
- scholars in the subject being assessed; and
- policymakers or representatives of the lay public.

These committees generally have worked from the objectives of prior assessments, refining and updating them, revising them to reflect more contemporary understanding of the subject, or changing them to reflect current interests in students' performance. The committees produced a set of objectives which were then circulated broadly for comment. Reviewers were asked, among other things, to comment on whether the objectives departed substantially from prevalent practice. These comments were considered in preparation of the final versions of the objectives, which were then submitted to the APC for approval. After they were approved, the objectives served as a point of reference for staff and for exercise development committees as they wrote questions and items for the assessments.

The 1988 assessment was a transitional one for NAEP. Until then, developing objectives was a one-stage process conducted at the national level as described above. One group representing all sectors in the nation's school system was used to set the objectives. For the 1988 assessments of civics and history, the NAEP grantee added a State Advisory Committee in addition to the overall Learning Area Committee. This was to provide more comprehensive and deeper consideration by states of the objectives. For future assessments conducted at the state level, it is presumed that the governance and assessment planning process will need to build farther in this direction to provide for participation by states in the consensus development.

The appendices include excerpts from the objectives booklets for the 1986 and 1988 reading assessments and for the 1988 civics assessment. These excerpts describe the consensus planning process that was used and list the individuals involved, showing the kinds of participants who have been represented.

III. HOW STATE-BY-STATE ASSESSMENT CHANGES THE DEMANDS PLACED ON THE PLANNING PROCESS

CIRCUMSTANCES INFLUENCING A CONSENSUS PROCESS FOR A NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

There are several conditions and features that define the consensus approach necessary for a national educational assessment program in the United States, as NAEP was through 1988:

- No reports are made on an educational unit (school, district, state) that has legal responsibility for educational outcomes; there is no direct accountability linkage.
- The content of an assessment does not need to be closely aligned with the educational objectives of an "accountable unit."
- The law requires participation be voluntary.
- Agreement to participate in a national assessment is typically based on the endorsement of the state superintendent and on the agreement and willingness of local district superintendents and principals of schools selected in the sampling process. This is based on the belief that NAEP is valuable or on the desire to be cooperative, not on the extent to which the test matches the local curriculum.

- Schools are sampled rarely, only a few students are involved in each school, NAEP provides someone to give the tests, and time out of class is brief, so participants have little at stake in the procedures used.

STATE ASSESSMENTS AND COMPARISONS CHANGE THE CIRCUMSTANCES

With the expansion of NAEP to produce state comparisons, the needs which the consensus process must meet are different, and material changes must be made in the process, compared with when the program was simply national in scope. The change in the demands is so fundamental that it prompted the blue-ribbon panel chaired by former-Governor of Tennessee Lamar Alexander on the expansion of NAEP to come up with a whole new model of governance for the project.

In state-comparative assessment, the changed circumstances meriting such a substantial restructuring of the governance and consensus planning process are as follows:

- In state assessment, there are identifiable units which are accountable and people who feel responsible for the performance of these units: State Superintendents, State Boards of Education, Legislators, Governors, and, indirectly, the policymakers and administrators of local districts which make up the states' school systems.

- Locals feel that results of state assessments may become the basis for a state-level change in what is expected of them. Though local accountability is indirect, it is nevertheless strong. As Lillian Barna, then Superintendent of the Albuquerque Schools and a member of the Planning Project Steering Committee said, "If someone is concerned about how New Mexico is doing, they are going to turn first to Albuquerque to try to bring up the state's average."

- With a "state report card," state and local officials must be concerned about the alignment of the test to their curriculum. It is fair and reasonable to test and hold states and local districts accountable only for a body of knowledge and skills that they agree is important.

- What the test measures becomes a significant factor in whether states and locals will be willing to participate in this voluntary activity. Since it is voluntary, the decision to enter will be based in part on the nature of the game, as defined by what will be tested.

- With state report cards and a larger sample, more schools and students are affected, state and local staff become more involved in administration of the program, and the conditions under which results are obtained and used for comparisons become more critical; thus, the procedures of the assessment become more important.

The new governance structure recommended by the Alexander group expanded the planning and objective-setting of the project; distinguished it from the exercise-development, data-collection, and analysis activities; and placed governance and policy-setting under an independent National Assessment Governing Board with policy-setting authority. The reasons for this were to create a stronger, more independent governance body that would be given over to constituencies including the states, which had a great stake in the conduct and ramifications of the expanded, state-by-state program. The primary responsibility of this Board, as conceived by the Alexander panel, was to provide

for the deepened and broadened consensus-development process required for state-comparative assessment, and the Board was envisioned and intended as a means of participatory self-governance of the project, by the field, through such a consensus-development process. The National Assessment Planning Project was intended to approximate this kind of self-governance and planning.

In addition to providing for a deeper consensus by states and others concerning what is tested, the changes brought by state-by-state assessment bring other, new governance needs. The greater salience of the program will bring not only more attention to educational programs in the states and localities; it will also bring more attention to the procedures and design of NAEP itself, and the governance board must protect and insulate the integrity of the program, while still being open to appropriate insights and improvements.

Finally, the expanded program will require commitment from local school districts to participate, and the planning of the project must support and encourage such commitment. Since there is no immediate incentive for locals to participate, and since there are several disincentives, the governance process must cultivate several, indirect bases for local participation: the ideal of the quality of the data; involvement in planning the program (and hence, development of ownership); and receiving data back after participation, even if its utility may be limited to serving as a check on standardized testing programs.

IV. CCSSO CONSORTIUM NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PLANNING PROCESS 1987-88

PURPOSE

The targets or topics of the planning done in the National Assessment Planning Project were twofold: to develop subject-area objectives in mathematics for the first state-by-state assessment in 1990 and to recommend the procedures to follow and the analytical models to be used in reporting results of the 1990 trial state assessment.

The goal of the consensus planning process was both educational and political. At a practical or strategic level, it was desirable to plan through a process that enabled those with a stake to air their views, develop ownership of the plans, and get on board with the emerging state-level NAEP program.

Educationally, a vision had emerged for the planning process in which it would be conducted so as to yield a more desirable product--plans that truly represented the best thinking of the field as to what was important to measure in the subject and how state-by-state assessment should be done. This vision had emerged in 1986, during the deliberations of the Alexander Study Group, when that group considered how a NAEP expanded to produce state-level results should be governed. Then, it was felt that the project should be governed by those with the greatest stake in the outcomes, and that governance should go beyond policy advice to include planning, setting the substantive objectives, designing the key features of the program and planning its procedures. It was felt that planning should be based on deep and extensive participation by teachers, policymakers, subject specialists, technicians and anyone who could bring visionary thinking to bear on the design of the assessment. It was envisioned that this process would be professionally exciting and that the assessment plans would reflect not just prevalent practice in the field, but the best that could be said in our nation about teaching, learning, and assessing a subject at any point in time.

For the National Assessment Planning Project, development of the mathematics objectives for the 1990 state-by-state assessment was conceived as requiring a consensus of the field as to the subject-matter to be tested, including some form of consensus or reconciliation of the subject matter recommended to be assessed with current state and local curriculum policies in mathematics.

Recommendations on assessment procedures and the models to be used to analyze and report results were viewed as requiring a different sort of consensus. A number of technical issues were understood to be involved in the expanded assessment that would require resolution through consultation with the best technical experts in the field. States were seen as possessing technical experience and expertise which should be solicited, distilled, and used to guide the design of the state-by-state assessment, but they were also seen as having a stake in many aspects of how the data will be analyzed and reported: a decision made one way or another (such as how to use demographic data to interpret results) could affect how states come out in the assessment. So, state staff as well as other experts were asked to advise on technical matters, and states were given an opportunity to comment on those design decisions which had great political and educational implications for them.

WORK PLAN AND SCHEDULE

The original work plan and time schedule for the planning process were developed by staff and reviewed, modified and approved by the project Steering Committee at its August, 1987 meeting. This provided for recommendations to be completed in February, 1988. The schedule for the National Assessment Planning Project was determined largely by the need to complete planning in time to inform the development of exercises for the 1990 assessment, which had to begin in April, 1988. This was an extraordinary constraint which made an adequate planning process impossible in some ways. Diagrams showing these schedules are included in the appendix in order to explain the processes used in this project; these schedules are not recommended as models for the future, because they were too short for adequate completion of most tasks.

At its initial meeting in August, the project's Steering Committee had adopted a policy statement on the purpose of state comparisons and the conditions that should be met, as follows:

> The purpose of state level student achievement comparison is to provide data on student performance to assist policymakers and educators to work toward the improvement of education. Such data can be useful by encouraging and contributing to a discussion of the quality of education and the conditions that determine it.
>
> State-comparative achievement data are useful if they:
>
> - Represent performance on a consensus of what is important to learn;
> - Use sound testing and psychometric practices;
> - Use procedures that minimize intrusion into instructional time;
> - Take into account different circumstances and needs that the states face; and

- Are associated with features of the school systems that can be improved by policymakers and educators.

The principles and parameters guided the two consensus planning processes.

The process used to attain each planning purpose is described below.

Mathematics Objectives

The activities which resulted in mathematics objectives for the state-by-state assessment were patterned in part after the consensus process that evolved over the years in planning prior national assessments in response to the language in Public Law 98-511, Section 405 (e) authorizing NAEP. In addition, however, the objectives were developed in a manner that was based on the recognition that the 1990 assessment in mathematics will provide state-by-state comparisons of student achievement. Because state report cards, as well as "The Nation's Report Card," would result from this assessment, the process was expanded considerably beyond recent practice to ensure that careful attention was given to the formal mathematics objectives of states and a sampling of local districts, and to the opinions of practitioners at the state and local levels of what should be assessed. The process, carried out between August, 1987 and March, 1988, had the following features:

- A Consortium Steering Committee with members recommended by each of the 18 national organizations representing policymakers, practitioners and citizens met, modified, and approved the overall plan of work.
- A Mathematics Objectives Committee was created to draft a set of recommended objectives. Its membership consisted of a teacher, a local school administrator, state mathematics education specialists, mathematicians, parents, and citizens. It met once for preliminary planning to consider and determine what information it would need prior to a major work session in December, 1987. For its review and consideration, the committee was provided the following:
  - Math Objectives 1885-86 Assessment (NAEP).
  - Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics).
  - Content analyses of state and local mathematics guides produced under subcontract by the Education Products Information Exchange.
  - Suggestions solicited from state mathematics specialists.
  - A report on "Issues in the Field" based on telephone interviews with leading mathematics educators.
  - A draft framework provided by a mathematics objectives subcommittee.
- At the December meeting, the Mathematics Objectives Committee took up the subcommittee's draft, enhancing and modifying it.
- In subsequent weeks, the draft report was edited for form, sample questions were added, and a copy was mailed to each state department of education mathematics specialist in the fifty states.

- o These individual specialists in each state were requested to convene a committee of state and local people to respond to the objectives. Those committees reviewed the draft report and returned comments and suggestions to the project staff.

- o A copy of the draft report was sent to, and comments received from, twenty-five national mathematics educators and mathematics scholars.

- o The reactions were given to the Mathematics Objectives Committee, which met a third time in late February.

- o Modifications were made in response to the comments, and the final draft report was reviewed, modified, and approved by the Project Steering Committee in mid-March.

PROCEDURES, ANALYSIS, AND REPORTING

A second target of the planning project was to consider how the achievement data should be collected, how data on students in a state should be presented, and how state-to-state comparative data should be reported. However popular with some, a simple number showing only that the average achievement of students in one state is higher or lower than that of students in another state is not enough. Recommendations were made on how state achievement data from the 1990 math assessment should be measured and reported by NAEP, how comparisons should be reported, and how several policy issues related to conducting state-level assessments should be resolved.

The process which produced these recommendations was designed principally to result in a broad, field-based consensus on the issues of expanding NAEP to state-level assessments. In part, the approach is reflected in the consensus process developed over the years by NAEP to select the objectives or knowledge and skills that an assessment will measure. That consensus process is responsive to the Federal law creating the National Assessment, but since the recommendations address analysis and reporting matters and several assessment policy issues, rather than the content that is tested, a national consensus process was not technically required. Public Law 98-511 vested authority for setting policies and approving reports with the NAEP Assessment Policy Committee. Nevertheless, an early determination was made to engage many policymakers, technicians, and scholars from across the country in an extensive process of consultation and collaboration on these procedural and design matters. This determination was based on the belief that such a process was likely to identify significant problems with designing "state report cards," as well as to provide constructive ideas.

The report was drafted under the project's Procedures, Analysis and Reports (PAR) Committee, but many others were involved, particularly the directors of assessment programs in each of the states. Many of these directors made recommendations during the planning process; they also responded to drafts with helpful suggestions. The process, carried out between August 1987 and March 1988, had the following features:

- o The project Steering Committee modified and approved the overall plan of work.

- o The Procedures, Analysis and Reports Committee was created to draft a report. Its membership consisted of policymakers, state and local district assessment specialists, and scholars in the field of assessment.

- o The Committee met once for preliminary planning to consider its charge and determine what information it wished to have prior to its major work-session in

December. For that major work-session, the Committee was given many documents, including the following:

- Copies of correspondence from state directors of assessment raising issues and suggesting ways that comparative data should be reported.
- An options paper entitled "Alternate Ways of Reporting State-by-State Comparisons" prepared for the Committee under a contract.
- Several recent publications on education indicators from CCSSO, the RAND Corporation, and others; lists of common student background questions from a variety of studies, including the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, Schools and Staffing Survey, Common Core of Data, and High School and Beyond; and the publication, The Underachieving Curriculum (International Study of Math Achievement).
- A background memorandum from the Southern Regional Education Board reviewing the procedures followed in eight southern states, in which school district employees administered NAEP tests in a state-by-state program.
- A report provided by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education on the inclusion of special students in NAEP.

- During its December meeting, the Committee made tentative decisions about the recommendations it wished to make.
- In subsequent weeks, a report was drafted by project staff based on those decisions, and copies were sent to state education agencies and selected state policymakers, local district educators, and scholars. Project staff discussed this report with the assessment subcommittee of the Committee on Evaluation and Information Systems (CEIS) of the Council of Chief State School Officers in a special meeting in January.
- All comments received on the draft were provided to the Procedures, Analysis, and Reports Committee, which met again in late February. The Committee reviewed the comments and completed its report.
- The Committee's report was reviewed, modified and adopted by the Project Steering Committee.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROCESS

GENERAL ISSUES IN THE CONSENSUS PLANNING PROCESS

1) The process used by the National Assessment Governing Board to plan NAEP should have the following features:

- It should be participatory, providing for democratic, bottom-up involvement of the field and of the constituencies affected by NAEP in determining its features.
- It should be visionary, seeking out and tapping the appropriate and best thinking in the nation (and the world) on the important decisions faced in planning the assessment: what subject-matter to test at each grade level,

what analyses to perform in interpreting results, how best to capitalize on sampling and scaling methodology, and how logistically to carry out a sound and fair assessment.

- o It should be iterative or interactive to allow suggestions and advice to influence one another and to create a planning process which evolves positively.

- o It should be structured and guided in advance by the policies and principles that are needed to conduct the planning process: what authority do committees have? Under what constraints are they operating? In what direction should they head?

- o It should be explicit in its rules, principles and procedures; these features should be set openly and explicitly, and they should be communicated effectively to the field to enhance the participatory quality discussed above.

- o It should be stable, following a viable cycle to its completion, adhering to predictable procedures as assessment cycles repeat themselves, and amending these procedures only when there are important reasons to change them.

- o It should be long enough to allow the values articulated above to be attained: participation by the field; thoughtful consultation for the best resolution of important issues; and planning in a way that is explicit, iterative, and structured by the necessary policies.

- o It should be supported by adequate devotion of time by the National Assessment Governing Board and its constituent committees, by adequate and appropriate-qualified staff who support the process in a professional but neutral manner, and by adequate operational resources to support the expenses entailed in planning by the field. A governance process which does not have these three kinds of support committed to it at the outset by Congress and by the U.S. Department of Education should not proceed.

2) The discussions of consensus committees should be managed in a value-free way, so as to be free-flowing, to encourage opinions, spontaneity and creativity, and to avoid curtailing or intimidating the participants.

At some points, the thinking of everyone involved in a committee planning process may falter or go astray. When this happens, either of two courses can be taken: one is to let the group work through the process, assuming that the process of self governance and consensus-building will work itself out. The other course is to manage the planning process somehow. This can be done, and it should be done through the gentle guidance of a competent but unbiased professional staff, a staff knowledgeable enough to know that the process has gone astray, but neutral and able to move the group along, though not toward any particular end.

3) The consensus planning process is an activity that should be mutually educational for those involved.

At times, the thinking of some participants will be more sound or creative than that of others; the latter will learn from the former, and the roles may be reversed at another time in the process.

4) Values and constraints governing the process should be stated up front.

In particular, judgements or values should be set explicitly at the outset: What will constitute "consensus"? How much innovation will be tolerated? How much detail is to be sought in the recommendations? How will differences be handled--will they be resolved, ignored, or expressed as a minority view? What "givens" from outside constrain the process?

5) Changes in the basic structure or rules of the consensus process while it is going on must be avoided.

Changes while the process is going on can disenfranchise the process itself, obviating or devaluing it. To some extent, the governance board can avoid this by making sure that the structures and ground-rules it controls are protected, left in place through the process until a time at which they can be changed. Others involved--Congress, the Secretary of Education, the Assistant Secretary for Research and Improvement, the Commissioner of NCES, and the staff of NCES--must also protect the integrity of each consensus planning process, by allowing it to proceed through one set of ground-rules before changing the rules. These individuals actually must help insulate the process from disruptive changes that could undermine it.

6) Solicitation of comment by formal committees representing the field, either on content or procedures, is needed only in response to draft recommendations.

In November, suggestions on the subject-matter framework were requested from state department math specialists rather than a state committee, and a similar solicitation was made of state assessment program staff for comments on procedural issues. This appeared adequate, as opposed to setting up and soliciting comments from a formal committee in each state at that point as well as later, when the recommendations were complete. Formal committees should be set up for review of recommendations in each subject to be assessed in states and in other constituency groups such as specialist teacher organizations. At earlier stages, suggestions can be sought from staff representatives of these constituencies.

7) With whom to work in state departments of education and in other constituencies must be decided carefully.

Chief state school officers need to be kept informed throughout as do the officers or other representatives of other major stakeholders. Communicating directly with the subject specialists in SEAs for initial suggestions and to set up state committees for response to draft objectives was valuable and successful. In each state department, however, a liaison had been identified by the chief as the primary contact for activities of the CCSSO State Education Assessment Center. Failure to inform them of the initial contact to the mathematics specialists was a problem brought up by several of the liaisons, most of whom are state assessment directors.

The problem, some assessment directors felt, was that mathematics curriculum specialists would not always recognize some of the implications of the planning exercise--that these decisions would ultimately affect the state's results on the comparative assessment. Assessment directors may be more sensitive to the political and educational ramifications of a high-stakes assessment than their curriculum specialist colleagues, because of their professional experience. Coordination between the two types of staff cannot be assumed, and it is

recommended that either everyone in any stakeholder organization receive much of the communication or that all communications go through one designated liaison who is responsible for involving and informing the proper staff or committees.

8) Work on the subject-matter objectives and on procedural and analytic plans should become a staff function of the governance process, and review by the field should become a part of the participation by the field in the planning process.

The cooperation of people in the field throughout the consensus planning process was very positive, and it would seem that future planning efforts can assume that such cooperation will be present. Funds were made available for states to reimburse expenses of their review groups, but most states did not request funds. Members of planning committees served without compensation for three, 2-day meetings. Those who worked on writing tasks beyond the three meetings were paid $250/day, the standard NAEP consultant rate, but this work should be done by paid staff in the future. This will be developed below. Token amounts were paid to scholars for mail review, again at the rate standard for NAEP, but this could be done without offering compensation as the NAEP planning process becomes more visible and important to the field.

9) The consensus planning process should be "self-evaluating".

Several times during the planning project, committees noted that their decision about how to resolve an issue could and should be "tested". As recommendations are made for the assessment through the governance board or other consensus planning process committees serving it, procedures should be set up to evaluate how the recommendations turn out. Recommendations usually are intended to have some effect; the committee making the recommendations can often say how and when one would know whether the intended effect has come about. The committees should be asked to do this, to suggest how the recommendation could be tested, and staff should have a systematic mechanism for following up on the evaluation procedures that are suggested. This feature would add enormously to the continuity of the planning process and what is learned from it. This is especially important when one recognizes that the governance board will experience considerable turnover, and that few if any of its members will serve long enough to track the effects of individual policies or recommendations through a complete assessment cycle.

10) The planning process should have a built-in buffer to ensure that recommendations which are made are thoughtful and appropriate.

A loop could be built into each planning-committee activity, so that at least some of the more important recommendations made or policies set by committees or the NAGB are held for some period of time until they can be considered again by the committee or Board, before they become final policy.

11) The National Center for Education Statistics must be adequately supported to staff and support the governance process.

Adequate support means having approvals and go-aheads to support the governance activity, having time to conduct planning and governance activities that are complete and sound, and having enough appropriate professional and other staff to support the work of the new National Assessment Governing Board. These provisions must be made by Congress, the Department of Education, and the leadership of NCES.

The National Assessment Planning Project attempted to approximate the planning activity that will be needed for state-by-state NAEP, using one full-time and two part-time staff, completing the work in eight months, and often awaiting policies and go-aheads while they were developed for the first time. While this was necessary in this instance, it revealed that more time is needed, that a larger and more comprehensive staff is needed, and that the Department must establish and maintain many policies to structure and support the process.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE OBJECTIVE-DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1) An explicit policy is needed by the NAGB to direct those developing objectives on the balance of assessing what students do know and can do and objectives that are primarily based on the belief of what should be taught students. While "cutting edge" curriculum development should, to some degree, be included in the assessment, if it gets too far outside what schools are currently teaching the willingness to participate will diminish. This must guided from a high-level governance body.

The primary issue confronted by this project's Mathematics Objectives Committee that will be at the forefront of future consensus planning activities was setting the balance between assessing what students know and can do now and what the committee thought they should be taught. This tension is present in any large-scale assessment program: given that the results of the assessment will be interpreted to drive instructional improvement, should the assessment be gauged to lead instruction toward a larger vision of what children should learn? Or, should it be designed to reflect what is currently taught, so it can be a neutral gauge of how much of that intended or planned curriculum is learned? The former will lead teaching forward, the latter will tend to maintain the status quo.

In the past, NAEP objectives have been formulated to lead instruction somewhat, but to rest close to current practice. In planning for state-by-state assessment, the resolution was set more toward leading the field, for several reasons. First, the states had already committed themselves, through CCSSO policy-setting on the issue, to strive for a comprehensive, forward-looking consensus and not to settle for a least common denominator of instructional content. Second, the Mathematics Objectives Committee was favorably disposed toward the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards, which were intended as forward-looking goals for mathematics instruction in the country over the next ten years. Finally, given the problem of how to reconcile curriculum objectives that one state might address and others not, the Committee adopted the principle that the objectives should be inclusive, incorporating those areas some states felt were important and not becoming a list only of what everyone was already pursuing. Once this inclusive approach was adopted, the compromise was made around how much weight should be given to the various areas. Less weight was assigned to areas that were more progressive in nature or less prevalently addressed at this time.

The scope of the objectives should be broadly inclusive of the curriculum and take into account the objectives of the various states and districts. They should include what various scholars, practitioners, and interested citizens expect to find in the curriculum. They should include the objectives that were tested in the previous assessments so that trend data can be provided (at least on those objectives). When one voice says "a" is important but not "b" and another voice supports "b" but not "a", an assessment usually can and should include both. The current methodology of

matrix sampling of items allows for broad coverage, and analysis and reporting methods that link results to measures of opportunity to learn can reveal whether differential outcomes are related to whether students were exposed to "a" or to "b". Finally, a narrow assessment is the greatest and perhaps most justifiable reason for some educational leaders in a state to choose not to participate. They may stay out because their state's objectives are not included or because they believe that the assessment is attempting inappropriately to narrow or steer the curriculum through the influence of the test or both, but they will be less likely to stay out because the assessment represents a broader vision of what should be tested.

2) The National Assessment Governing Board should have staff specialists who can coordinate the meetings and draft material representing the objective-development and other committees' work.

The magnitude of the work that had to be done by the Mathematics Objectives Committee was underestimated in this project and did not account for staffing. An objective-setting committee must ultimately produce a report that is both substantive and substantial. No person on the project staff was able to draft the report, so preparing it depended on committee members. This is a problem NAEP has addressed by assigning a staff specialist to each subject-area assessment and structuring learning area committee meetings to permit the committee to produce wording of changes in existing objectives. In our case, the task called for a more basic consideration of the objectives, and this will be true in the future. A sub-committee was asked to prepare a preliminary draft of the objectives for the Committee, and this helped expedite the Committee's task.

Staff specialists assigned to support the planning process in the future should include one specialist for each subject that is assessed as well as others who are specialists in methodological issues. The assessment-development specialists should be trained and experienced professionals with either a background in the academic discipline being assessed and experience in developing or managing instruction in that subject, or they should be specialists in the education of the subject with a demonstrated capability to tap thinking of scholars in the discipline as to its priorities. During each assessment development cycle (the two-year process of developing the objectives and exercises for a subject-area assessment) the person's primary assignment should be supporting the development of objectives for their subject and coordinating follow-up work on test and item specifications after objectives are developed.

3) Getting preliminary suggestions from state department subject specialists and asking them well in advance to establish state committees to review the draft recommendations seemed particularly valuable in not only getting good ideas, but in planting the seed for eventual support of the content of the state assessment.

Our effort to elicit state reviews of the draft mathematics objectives in February succeeded partly because each state was asked three months in advance to prepare for this. This gave them time to set up committees and a means for responding in their state that involved the appropriate people. This approach should be weighed thoughtfully in comparison with the NAEP experience of using a committee of seven representatives from the states for the 1988 assessments in history and civics. Much may be gained by providing for comprehensive consideration and input and adequate lead-time to prepare for responses.

4) Systematic analysis of state curriculum frameworks should be done and used as background for setting objectives in the future, but it should be placed in relation to other resources and activities in the consensus-building process.

In the planning project, a contract with Education Products Information Exchange produced reports on the degree of alignment of state curriculum guides with the prior NAEP objectives. This was available for use by the Committee, but several factors limited the extent to which this information was used by the Committee. First, it was difficult to present the analysis in a way in which the results were comprehensible and useful. The guides varied widely in their level of specificity and in the degree to which they constituted state policy. Also, it was difficult to find the appropriate level at which to pitch the analysis. Guides varied widely in their content at a fine level of detail, but they were quite similar if one looked at their content at a more global level. The utility of this kind of analysis must be worked out through its details.

Second, state committee review was ultimately important to the Objectives Committee as a check on the alignment and compatibility of state curriculum policies with the recommended objectives, as opposed to the content analysis. The content analysis should be regarded more appropriately as a resource or reference when states begin consideration of a set of objectives rather than as a basis for determining the suitability of a set of objectives once they are drafted.

Finally, the need to reconcile states' differences in their curricular policies was outweighed by support for a new, comprehensive, inclusive framework for the assessment. Systematic, objective comparison of the policies was simply overshadowed by the consensus-building phenomenon that occurred around the prospect of a new set of directions. In the future, the type of objective analysis of curriculum frameworks done by EPIE should be seen as useful background, but not as the paramount determiner of the common ground of the assessment.

5) A careful line must be tread between using the prior objectives as a resource and approaching each objective-setting exercise as a full and deep process of reconsidering our values, needs and priorities in the subject.

The prior NAEP objectives were an important resource in the objective-setting process, helping structure the Committee's thinking on how the objectives should be stated and presented, but the principle of basic reconsideration must be emphasized clearly to give the governance process legitimacy and to avoid inappropriate adherence to continuity with the past.

6) Future objective-setting tasks should include a broad review of curricular issues, commissioned at least eight months before it is needed, and presented as a brief but substantive summary to be read by committee members before their deliberations about the objectives.

A ten- to fifteen-page summary of trends and issues seems appropriate and could be prepared by staff with appropriate participation by the field. A proposed review of literature on mathematics curriculum priorities was conducted for the planning project in the form of a series of interviews with leading math educators, mostly from higher education. These interviews were summarized and reported to the Mathematics Objectives Committee. The purpose was to identify issues and provide guidance to the committee so major issues were not overlooked. In this project, there was insufficient time to prepare a traditional literature review between

September and the Mathematics Objectives Committee work in early December. Several scholars were asked, but they declined to attempt the effort on the short time schedule. Interviews with experts in the field, reported orally to the Committee, were viewed by the Committee as a useful and adequate fall-back in this instance. But a longer time frame would allow a more traditional review to be prepared.

7) Systematic solicitation of comment on objectives from a broad range of scholars and educators should be continued and enhanced. The review should be broad, involving academic scholars in the discipline, specialists in its teaching and learning, teachers and school administrators, and interested representatives of groups such employers. The review process should be highly publicized, should be long enough to permit comment, and should include procedures for explicitly incorporating review comments in subsequent drafting of objectives.

In this project, comments were solicited by mail from scholars (math educators) on the prior NAEP objectives and on the NCTM standards before the mathematics objectives were drafted. This produced some responses, but more responses came in reaction to the actual draft objectives in January. All comments were incorporated by staff into the draft report completed by the committee in February.

Respondents were paid $50.00 for reacting to the draft. As discussed below, this may not be necessary or appropriate as participation in these activities becomes broader and is recognized by the field as a more important event.

8) The NAEP planning process should become an event which drives consideration and development of national goals for education in a subject, through the process of helping determine what to test.

The NCTM draft mathematics curriculum standards became a very important document in the objective-setting process. It was the product of widespread involvement of math educators over the prior two years. In the future, NAEP can capitalize on such developments if they are available in areas such as reading, writing, science, history, or civics. If they are not available, it may not be feasible to commission the two-year process required to produce such standards as part of the objective-setting task in planning an individual assessment, but over time the NAEP consensus planning process will begin to precipitate such efforts by professions, so they can be factored in to the consensus planning. There is evidence this is already taking place in anticipation of the 1992 state-by-state assessment in reading.

Again, consistent with the vision for the planning process discussed earlier, this event should become a very appropriate means for tapping the best thinking among our teachers, academicians, curriculum specialists, and the concerned public (such as the business community) about what in a subject should be taught and where instruction in that subject should be headed. Ultimately, the NAEP planning process should have consciously-developed links, established by the NAGB and its staff, between it and the analogues in other subject areas of the development of the NCTM standards.

9) In future assessments, professional associations and blue-ribbon boards can be called-upon to guide those working on the objectives toward a range of thoughtful specialists, or toward existing or ongoing efforts to define objectives in a curricular area. The National Academy of Education, the National Science Board, and the specialist teachers' organizations could fulfill this role.

Initially, the role of the Mathematical Sciences Education Board (MSEB) was not well defined in the planning process. They became very helpful in securing people for Committees and for mail review.

10) As part of the process discussed above, where setting the objectives for the assessment becomes an event which precipitates thinking by the field, the business community should be encouraged to identify their values, needs, and priorities for each subject.

Business community input was difficult to achieve. Advice from others who had tried to involve business leaders in thinking about mathematics content was not encouraging. A literature review provided few detailed suggestions from this perspective on math content for schools. One recent report from the Committee on Educational Development recommended what content areas should be emphasized; it was provided to the committee as background information.

11) In future, the NAEP program must include an orderly sequence of producing objectives, specifying test and item characteristics, and developing exercises, each clearly documented and available for review at appropriate times.

The point was made by some state assessment directors and mathematics specialists that in deciding whether to participate in a state-level NAEP, more detail would be needed on the content of the assessment than that provided by the traditional format of NAEP objectives booklet. The Mathematics Objectives Committee responded to this by including sample exercises in the report. As the draft was circulated, the need for test descriptions and items became even more apparent than anticipated at the start of the project. It was not feasible to produce these two documents in the time frame in which the project was conducted, and they were provided-for separately and after the fact by the NAEP grantee to support review by states of draft exercises.

Producing these documents should be the responsibility of the National Assessment Governing Board. They should be conducted or contracted by the NAGB and conveyed to the Department of Education for use in guiding the development of exercises by the NAEP operations contractor. The need for appropriate staff to support the objective-setting exercise was discussed earlier; the NAGB should have staff or contracting resources to permit it to produce test and item specifications, if it does this directly, or to contract for them if that is more convenient or appropriate. Maintaining NAGB responsibility for objectives and specifications is the appropriate way to divide and execute responsibilities between NAGB, NCES and the NAEP operational contractor conducting the assessment, as distinguished in the new legislation.

12) The consensus process, starting with establishment of the committee to develop the objectives and to develop or oversee the development of item specifications should begin sufficiently in advance of submitting the reports to NCES for conveyance to the NAEP operational contractor.

The original time-line for developing the math objectives in this project was extended when it became apparent that the work-plan for January and February was not possible, because of the time required for various reviews. The completion date for the recommendations was extended to April 1, 1988, when NAEP staff reported they needed to start drafting exercises by that date. Even still, seven months from

start-up through approvals is far too little time to solicit thinking from the field and the nation generally.

If item writing for the 1992 assessment must start April 1, 1990 the following schedule seems to be a minimum:

NAGB establish committee, prepare for its start, alert field to process--2 months	Dec. 1, 1988
Start development of objectives by committee--6 months	Feb. 1, 1989
Start development of item specifications, 5 1/2 months	Aug. 1, 1989
To ED for review-- Two months	Jan. 15, 1990
Revision by NAGB and conveyance by NCES to operations contractor to begin preparing exercises	March 15, 1990

For the planning of a state-level assessment according to the approach used in this project, the consensus process needs to begin at least sixteen months in advance of the beginning of item writing by the NAEP operational contractor. This is to provide six complete months after the establishment of the Objectives Committee to develop objectives, after the committee is organized, and it provides more than five months for the development of test and item specifications by staff or a contractor, after the objectives are complete, but before test-development begins. If the process is even broader and more time-consuming than the one reported here, which it should be in order to include more tapping of thinking in the field, then that time should be extended at least six months.

13) Over time, what each successive assessment measures in a subject should be dynamic, reflecting changes in what practitioners, scholars, and interested citizens believe should be taught. Otherwise, the assessment will discourage curriculum development and be unresponsive to innovation in the discipline or to circumstances in the world that justify change in our view of what is important for students to know and be able to do.

Having trend data to measure progress based on some of the same objectives between assessments is important. It is not likely, however, that subject matter content would change so much over two to six years (between assessments) that there would not be enough common objectives to provide trend data. Analysis and reporting methodology can differentiate success with new objectives from historical trends.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PLANNING PROCEDURES, ANALYSIS, AND REPORTING

1) Planning procedural and design features should be done under a spirit of basic consideration of the issues.

As in the Math Objectives Committee, this group made many recommendations that departed from past NAEP practice. They were advised at the outset not to be limited as a constraint to current procedures or resources. For example, they recommended reporting assessment results by curriculum sub-area rather than just by the overall NAEP proficiency scales for the subject. This freedom of scope is essential to a legitimate consensus planning process.

2) Development of procedural and analytic recommendations should be done by a consensus planning committee supported by appropriately qualified staff.

In the planning project, it was presumed that committee recommendations could be prepared at least in preliminary form by the Committee. This was impossible; staff had to work from committee deliberations and decisions to prepare a report containing recommendations. This will continue to be true in the future, and the NAGB should support procedural and analytic planning committees with staff. These staff should have expertise in design issues including sampling, scaling, and analytical models; they should also have expertise in practical matters in the administration of an assessment, including ensuring that procedures are valid and consistent. During each, two-year assessment cycle, NAGB should have one full-time staff member whose primary responsiblity is to help planning committees seek input and advice on these issues, prepare recommendations and other reports, and work with NCES and the operational contractor on the implementation of recommendations.

3) When changes are recommended in the NAEP design or procedures, they should be evaluated and they should be controlled to avoid making too many changes at once.

While the procedural features for the state-level NAEP were being considered, two specific problems brought this issue to the fore. One was exploration of possible causes for anomalous results in the 1988 reading assessment. The other was consideration of how to structure state and federal responsibilities in the expanded NAEP--whether to change the mode of test-administration from contractor administration to cooperative administration by state and local staff. The PAR Committee felt that in these instances lay a strong rationale for introducing new procedural changes only under conditions where their effects could be controlled and measured.

3) While the issues confronted by the PAR Committee seemed fairly technical and specific, and their resolution by the Committee may have seemed cut-and-dried, the issues were in many many ways as profound as the determination of subject matter which was confronted by the Mathematics Objectives Committee.

Determination of how state-by-state results are to be presented, the degree to which background conditions are to be taken into account, and the educational processes with which achievement results are to be related at the state level are weighty tasks, philosophically and educationally. Their resolutions, while appearing to constitute straightforward methodological decisions, have great political and educational import. This fact should be remembered as these issues are considered, so that their

consideration is not erroneously relegated to a mundane methodological realm, because these issues will refuse to remain in such realm. Their social and political nature must be confronted squarely and by people with appropriate insights and expertise to resolve them. The process also revealed that a planning committee can successfully lay down design principles and decisions that can guide that project. These decisions need not be left entirely to staff to resolve along the way; many of them must be resolved by a politically-representative body.

4) NAEP should have a modest pool of resources that are devoted to new ideas, while the practical constraints and need for caution in the ongoing program are honored.

The tension between the assessment being descriptive and being prescriptive applies to the consideration of technical issues as well as to consideration of content. Here, the issue for the future is the effect on innovation. Consensus planning tends to be levelling, toward a common denominator of professional opinion. This is exacerbated in the instance of planning NAEP, because of the constant need to plan an assessment that must be in the field in two or three years. Although very bright ideas may emerge in the planning process, if they are too innovative they are discouraged or shelved in light of the practical need to plan something that can be done and that will be technically reliable in the near term. Unlike innovations or progressive stands taken on the content to be assessed, innovations in methodological areas often involve real risks and material costs. Progressive content, on the other hand, risks only falling short and not progressing as quickly as we desired. These risks are non-specific and the cost of being ambitious is low and distant. Therefore, there is a need for the planning process to be complemented with a means to support methodological innovation.

No more than $200-250,000 would be required to support as many as a dozen specialists working on the viability of their innovations. Such a program could be conducted by NAGB or, under its direction, by NCES, as a discretionary program of grants awarded competitively to contributing planners, analysts, and technical specialists in the field.

5) The most intellectually demanding issues addressed by this committee were how to handle demographic data in reporting results and how to relate results to characteristics of school programs. A consultant paper on the issues was useful in guiding the Committee toward its recommendations. In the future, this issue and how to handle it technically will continue to demand thinking by planning committees and further development of techniques. A NAGB subcommittee, armed with contemporary consultant papers, should be dedicated to this and related issues.

Also, since the expanded NAEP has as one purpose more informed policymaking, the presentation of results should be worked out through a back-and-forth planning process involving representative policymakers and planning committees on the design of the formats for presenting results. Ideally, this should be done around mock-ups of possible displays.

6) States and other constituencies should be consulted in the future on procedural and design issues.

Input from states on PAR issues was timely and valuable. Fully half of the states either made comments at the outset or responded to drafts on the PAR issues.

States contributed substantially to the resolution of some technical issues. One state, for example, provided a simulation of how to use demographic variables to interpret states' comparative assessment results. This should be solicited and encouraged in the future. Most states seemed more interested in getting adequate specification of some solution, rather than being interested in one particular solution.

7) Professional associations provided useful resources on some issues: their help should be sought on specific issues in planning in the future.

The question of how to specify rules for inclusion of special students was solved largely by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, and the Association of State Assessment Programs provided very concrete advice on the development of test specifications. These resources can be relied-upon in the future, and others can be brought in to help on other issues.

8) The development of item specifications must be built into the planning process to precede item writing. This should result in a free-standing document that is in addition to the objective booklet and that can be reviewed by stakeholders prior to development of exercises.

CONCLUSION

The National Assessment Planning Project served two purposes. One was to make the transition substantively from a National Assessment of Educational Progress to a state-by-state one, to actually decide how that would be done. The other was to serve as an experiment or stalking-horse in the planning of something as sensitive as a state-by-state educational assessment in the United States. This report is aimed at realizing that experiment. If the project was successful, the observations and recommendations put forth here will provide the National Assessment Governing Board and its staff and custodians in the National Center for Education Statistics with something valuable, based on this unique experience.

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APPENDIX A

READING OBJECTIVES, 1987; NAEP

Reading objectives

1986 and 1988 Assessments

June 1987

National Assessment of Educational Progress
CN 6710
Princeton, NJ 08541-6710

The development process

The National Assessment appreciates the efforts of all the individuals who contribute to the development of a reading assessment. Many people, including university professors, classroom teachers, legislators, parents, and other interested individuals, participated in developing and in reviewing drafts of the objectives.

This particular objectives booklet combines the work of two Learning Area Committees—those from the 1983-84 and the 1985-86 reading assessments—and extends at least through the 1987-88 reading assessment.

Special thanks are due to the members of these committees who developed the framework and specifications for the assessment, were responsive to the reviews, and spent long hours reviewing and revising objectives and exercises. Appreciation is also due to Kalle Gerritz, reading coordinator for NAEP's 1985-86 assessment.

The National Assessment extends its deep appreciation to all participants and reviewers:

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Michael Axline, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR

Fernie Baca, University of Colorado, Denver, CO

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APPENDIX B

CIVICS: UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OBJECTIVES, 1988; NAEP

CIVICS: UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT & POLITICS OBJECTIVES

1988 ASSESSMENT

SEPTEMBER 1987

National Assessment of Educational Progress
CN 6710
Princeton, NJ 08541-6710

Introduction & overview

The Development Process

Since 1969, The Nation's Report Card, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), has been responsible for collecting information about the educational achievement of our nation's youth in a variety of subject areas. These areas have included reading, mathematics, writing, science, music, art, literature, computer competence, social studies, and citizenship. Civics was first measured in the context of the 1969-70 Citizenship assessment, again in the 1974-75 Citizenship assessment, and a third time in 1981-82 as part of a combined assessment of citizenship and social studies. The objectives contained in this booklet represent a modification of some of the 1981-82 Citizenship objectives and additional objectives which reflect current trends in civics education.*

The new statement was developed by NAEP's Learning Area and State Advisory Committees and has been reviewed extensively by teachers, curriculum specialists, and school administrators to ensure that the assessment topics do not diverge substantially from current instructional practice or expectations. All of the contributors and reviewers were selected to reflect the perspectives of peo-

*Citizenship and Social Studies Objectives: 1981-82 Assessment (Booklet No. 13 CS-10). Denver CO: National Assessment of Educational Progress, Education Commission of the States

ple in various sizes and types of communities, from many geographic regions, and from a variety of racial/ethnic groups.

This final statement does not necessarily reflect the views of every individual who participated in the development and review processes, but presents, as accurately as possible, the consensus reached.

The Assessment of Civics: United States Government and Politics

The assessment of civics will take place during the Bicentennial of the writing of the United States Constitution, the oldest written national constitution in the world. Participation in the government of the United States by all individuals is what forms a democracy—our government is of, by, and for the people. To endure, a democracy relies on the ability and willingness of its citizens to be involved intelligently in political and public affairs at all levels: local, state, national, and international.

The broad purpose of including U.S. government and civics in school curricula is to prepare students to reflect on and participate in the political decision-making processes of our society. Understanding democratic principles will help students appreciate and exercise their rights as well as recognize the responsibilities inherent in being a United States citizen. Studying the structure of our government, the functions of its three branches, and the political processes by which decisions are made will enable students to participate more fully and effectively as informed citizens.

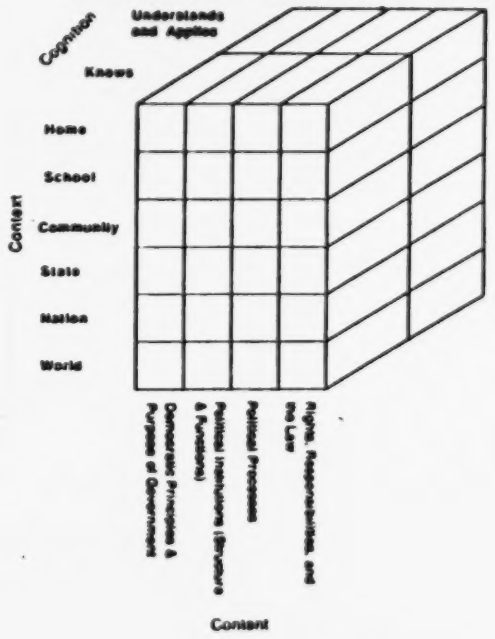
The Objectives Framework for Civics: United States Government and Politics

A three-dimensional matrix made up of Content, Context, and Cognition outlines the broad objectives for civics education. Figure 1 presents the matrix and shows how each

dimension is divided into major categories. Each exercise in the assessment can be classified within the matrix by matching the category of content it assesses, the context in which the question is asked, and the cognitive skill it measures.

Together, these dimensions help define the major objectives of United States civics education and provide guidelines for developing questions to assess students at age 9/grade 4, age 13/grade 8, and age 17/grade 12. This conceptual framework and the objectives themselves may be useful to curriculum developers in their own considerations of scope and priorities at state and local levels.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework for Civics: United States Government and Politics Objectives



Participants in the development process

The National Assessment appreciates the efforts of all of the individuals who contributed to the development of the 1988 Civics Objectives. Many educators, including university professors, history and social science researchers, classroom teachers, school administrators, and curriculum specialists, as well as concerned parents and lay persons, participated in developing and reviewing successive drafts. These objectives could not have been developed without their substantial involvement. The National Assessment wishes to extend its gratitude to all participants.

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APPENDIX C

PUBLIC LAW 98-511, SECTION 405(e)

(1) In addition to the other responsibilities of the Office under this section, the Office shall carry out, by grant or cooperative agreement with a nonprofit educational organization, a National Assessment of Educational Progress which shall have as a primary purpose the assessment of the performance of children and young adults in the basic skills of reading, mathematics, communication, and other subjects and skills. Such a National Assessment shall—

(A) collect and report at least once every five years data assessing the performance of students at various age or grade levels in each of the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics;

(B) report periodically data on changes in knowledge and skills of such students over a period of time;

(C) conduct special assessments of other educational areas, as the need for additional national information arises;

(D) include in assessment activities information on special groups of individuals;

(E) provide technical assistance to State educational agencies and to local educational agencies on the use of National Assessment objectives, primarily pertaining to—

(i) the basic skills of reading, mathematics, and communication, and

(ii) on making comparisons of such assessments with the national profile (including special population profiles) and change data developed by the National Assessment; and

(F) with respect to each State which voluntarily participates in accordance with paragraph (5), provide a statement of information collected by the National Assessment for each such State.

(2)(A) The organization through which the Office carries out the National Assessment shall be responsible for overall management of the National Assessment. Such organization shall delegate authority to design and supervise the conduct of the National Assessment to an Assessment Policy Committee, established by such organization. The Assessment Policy Committee shall be composed of—

(i) five members appointed by the organization of whom two members shall be representatives of business and industry and three members shall be representatives of the general public; and

(ii) fourteen members appointed by the organization from the categories of membership specified in subparagraph (B).

(B) Members of the Assessment Policy Committee appointed in accordance with subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be—

"(i) one chief State school officer;

"(ii) two State legislators;

"(iii) two school district superintendents;

(iv) one member of a State board of education;

(v) one member of a local school board;

(vi) one Governor of a State;

(vii) four classroom teachers;

(viii) one elementary school principal; and

(ix) one secondary school principal.

(C) The Assistant Secretary shall serve as an ex officio member of the Assessment Policy Committee. The Assistant Secretary shall also appoint a member of the Council to serve as nonvoting member of the Assessment Policy Committee.

(D) Members appointed in accordance with subparagraph (A) (i) and (ii) shall be appointed for terms for three years on a staggered basis.

(3) The Assessment Policy Committee established by paragraph (2) shall be responsible for the design of the National Assessment, including the selection of the learning areas to be assessed, the development and selection of goal statements and assessment items, the assessment methodology, the form and content of the reporting and dissemination of assessment results, and studies to evaluate and improve the form and utilization of the National Assessment. The appropriateness of all cognitive, background, and attitude items developed as part of the National Assessment shall be the responsibility of the Assessment Policy Committee. Such items shall be subject to review by the Department of Education and the Office of Management and Budget for a single period of not more than sixty days.

(4) Each learning area assessment shall have goal statements devised through a national consensus approach, providing for active participation of teachers, curriculum specialists, subject matter specialists, local school administrators, parents, and members of the general public. All items selected for use in the assessment shall be reviewed to exclude items which might reflect racial, sex, cultural, or regional bias.

(5) Participation in the National Assessment by State and local education agencies selected as part of a sample of such agencies shall be voluntary.

(6) The Secretary shall provide for a periodic review of the National Assessment. This review shall provide an opportunity for public comment on the conduct and usefulness of the National Assessment and shall result in a report to the Congress, the President, and the Nation on the findings and recommendations, if any, of the review. The Secretary shall consider the findings and recommendations in designing the competition to select the organization through which the Office carries out the National Assessment.

APPENDIX D

PUBLIC LAW 100-297, SECTION 3403

20 USC 4843.

SEC. 3243. DEFINITIONS.

For the purpose of this part—

(1) the term "at risk" means students who, because of learning deficiencies, lack of school readiness, limited English proficiency, poverty, educational or economic disadvantage, or physical or emotional handicapping conditions face greater risk of low educational achievement and have greater potential of becoming school dropouts;

(2) the term "Board" means the Fund Board established under section 3231;

(3) the term "Fund" means the Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching established under section 3202; and

(4) the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Education.

PART C—NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

National Assessment of Education Progress Improvement Act.

SEC. 3461. SHORT TITLE.

20 USC 1221 note.

This part may be cited as the "National Assessment of Educational Progress Improvement Act".

20 USC 1221e-1 note.

SEC. 3462. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.

The purpose of this part is to improve the effectiveness of our Nation's schools by making objective information about student performance in selected learning areas available to policymakers at the national, regional, State, and local levels. To enhance its utility, such information shall be both representative and comparable and shall be maintained in a manner that ensures the privacy of individual students and their families. It is not the purpose of this Act to authorize the collection or reporting of information on student attitudes or beliefs or on other matters that are not germane to the acquisition and analysis of information about academic achievement.

SEC. 3463. NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—Section 406 of the General Education Provisions Act (hereafter in this part referred to as "the Act" and as amended by section 3001 of this title) is amended by redesignating subsection (i) as subsection (j) and by inserting after subsection (h) the following:

20 USC 1221e-1.

Grants. Contracts.

"(i)(1) With the advice of the National Assessment Governing Board established by paragraph (5)(a)(i), the Commissioner shall carry out, by grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements with qualified organizations, or consortia thereof, a National Assessment of Educational Progress. The National Assessment of Educational Progress shall be placed in the National Center for Education Statistics and shall report directly to the Commissioner for Educational Statistics. The purpose of the National Assessment is the assessment of the performance of children and adults in the basic skills of reading, mathematics, science, writing, history/geography and other areas selected by the Board.

"(2)(A) The National Assessment shall provide a fair and accurate presentation of educational achievement in skills, abilities, and knowledge in reading, writing, mathematics, science, history/geography, and other areas specified by the Board, and shall use sampling techniques that produce data that are representative on a

national and regional basis and on a State basis pursuant to subparagraphs (C)(i) and (C)(ii). In addition, the National Assessment shall— Reports.

"(i) collect and report data on a periodic basis, at least once every 2 years for reading and mathematics; at least once every 4 years for writing and science; and at least once every 6 years for history/geography and other subject areas selected by the Board;

"(ii) collect and report data every 2 years on students at ages 9, 13, and 17 and in grades 4, 8, and 12;

"(iii) report achievement data on a basis that ensures valid reliable trend reporting;

"(iv) include information on special groups.

"(B) In carrying out the provisions of subparagraph (A), the Secretary and the Board appointed under paragraph (5) shall assure that at least 1 of the subject matters in each of the 4 and 6 year cycles described in subparagraph (A)(i) will be included in each 2 year cycle Assessment.

"(C)(i) The National Assessment shall develop a trial mathematics assessment survey instrument for the eighth grade and shall conduct a demonstration of the instrument in 1990 in States which wish to participate, with the purpose of determining whether such an assessment yields valid, reliable State representative data.

"(ii) The National Assessment shall conduct a trial mathematics assessment for the fourth and eighth grades in 1992 and, pursuant to subparagraph (6)(D), shall develop a trial reading assessment to be administered in 1992 for the fourth grade in States which wish to participate, with the purpose of determining whether such an assessment yields valid, reliable State representative data.

"(iii) The National Assessment shall ensure that a representative sample of students participate in such assessments.

"(iv) No State may agree to participate in the demonstration described in this subsection without full knowledge of the process for consensus decisionmaking on objectives to be tested, required in paragraph (6)(E), and of assessment demonstration standards for sampling, test administration, test security, data collection, validation and reporting. States wishing to participate shall sign an agreement developed by the Commissioner. A participating State shall review and give permission for release of results from any test of its students administered as a part of this demonstration prior to the release of such data. Refusal by a State to release its data shall not restrict the reporting of data from other States that have approved the release of such data. Contracts.

"(v) The Commissioner shall provide for an independent evaluation conducted by a nationally recognized organization (such as the National Academy of Sciences or the National Academy of Education) of the pilot programs to assess the feasibility and validity of assessments and the fairness and accuracy of the data they produce. The report shall also describe the technical problems encountered and a description about what was learned about how to best report data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The results of this report will be provided to the Congress and to States which participated in assessments pursuant to paragraph (C)(i) and (ii) within 18 months of the time such assessments were conducted. Reports.

"(D)(i) The National Assessment shall have the authority to develop and conduct, upon the direction of the Board and subject to the availability of appropriations, assessments of adult [illegible]

"(3)(A) The National Assessment shall not collect any data that are not directly related to the appraisal of educational performance, achievements, and traditional demographic reporting variables, or to the fair and accurate presentation of such information.

"(B) The National Assessment shall provide technical assistance to States, localities, and other parties that desire to participate in the assessment to yield additional information described in paragraph (2).

Public information.

"(4)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the public shall have access to all data, questions, and test instruments of the National Assessment.

Classified information.

"(B)(i) The Commissioner shall ensure that all personally identifiable information about students, their educational performance, and their families and that information with respect to individual schools remain confidential, in accordance with section 552a of title 5, United States Code.

"(ii) Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, the Secretary may decline to make available to the public for a period not to exceed 10 years following their initial use cognitive questions that the Secretary intends to reuse in the future.

"(C) The use of National Assessment test items and test data employed in the pilot program authorized in subsection (2)(C) to rank, compare, or otherwise evaluate individual students, schools, or school districts is prohibited.

Establishment.

"(5)(A)(i) There is established the National Assessment Governing Board (hereafter in this section referred to as the 'Board').

"(ii) The Board shall formulate the policy guidelines for the National Assessment.

"(B) The Board shall be appointed by the Secretary in accordance with this subparagraph and subparagraphs (C), (D), and (E). The Board shall be composed of—

"(i) two Governors, or former Governors, who shall not be members of the same political party;

"(ii) two State legislators, who shall not be members of the same political party;

"(iii) two chief State school officers;

"(iv) one superintendent of a local educational agency;

"(v) one member of a State board of education;

"(vi) one member of a local board of education;

"(vii) three classroom teachers representing the grade levels at which the National Assessment is conducted;

"(viii) one representative of business or industry;

"(ix) two curriculum specialists;

"(x) two testing and measurement experts;

"(xi) one nonpublic school administrator or policymaker;

"(xii) two school principals, one elementary and one secondary;

"(xiii) three additional members who are representatives of the general public, including parents.

The Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement shall serve as an ex officio member of the Board as a nonvoting member.

"(C)(i) The Secretary and the Board shall ensure at all times that the membership of the Board reflects regional, racial, gender and cultural balance and diversity and that it exercises its independent judgment, free from inappropriate influences and special interests.

"(ii) In the exercise of its functions, powers, and duties, the Board shall hire its own staff and shall be independent of the Secretary and the other offices and officers of the Department of Education.

"(iii) The Secretary may appoint, at the direction of the Board, for terms not to exceed 3 years, without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, not more than 6 technical employees to administer this subsection who may be paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

"(D)(i) The members of the Assessment Policy Committee, serving on the date of enactment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress Improvement Act, shall become members of the Board for the remainder of the terms of the appointment to the Assessment Policy Committee.

"(ii) To complete the initial membership of the Board, the Secretary shall appoint members of the Board as necessary in the categories described in subparagraph (B) for which there are no members continuing from the Assessment Policy Committee on the date of enactment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress Improvement Act. The Secretary shall appoint such members from among nominees furnished by the Governors, chief State school officers, education associations and organizations, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Education, parent organizations, and learned societies.

"(iii) As vacancies occur, new members of the Board shall be appointed by the Secretary from among individuals who are nominated by the Board after consultation with representatives of the groups listed in subparagraph (B). For each vacancy the Board shall nominate at least 3 individuals who, by reason of experience or training, are qualified in that particular Board vacancy.

"(E) Members of the Board appointed in accordance with this paragraph shall serve for terms not to exceed 4 years which shall be staggered, as determined by the Secretary, subject to the provisions of subparagraph (D)(i). Any appointed member of the Board who changes status under subparagraph (B) during the term of the appointment of the member may continue to serve as a member until the expiration of that term.

"(6)(A) In carrying out its functions under this subsection, the Board shall be responsible for—

"(i) selecting subject areas to be assessed (consistent with paragraph (2)(A));

"(ii) identifying appropriate achievement goals for each age and grade in each subject area to be tested under the National Assessment;

"(iii) developing assessment objectives;

"(iv) developing test specifications;

"(v) designing the methodology of the assessment;

"(vi) developing guidelines and standards for analysis plans and for reporting and disseminating results;

"(vii) developing standards and procedures for interstate, regional and national comparisons; and

"(viii) taking appropriate actions needed to improve the form and use of the National Assessment.

"(B) The Board may delegate any functions described in subparagraph (A) to its staff.

"(C) The Board shall have final authority on the appropriateness of cognitive items.

"(D) The Board shall take steps to ensure that all items selected for use in the National Assessment are free from racial, cultural, gender, or regional bias.

"(E) Each learning area assessment shall have goal statements devised through a national consensus approach, providing for active participation of teachers, curriculum specialists, local school administrators, parents and concerned members of the general public.

Reports.

"(F) The Secretary shall report to the Board at regular intervals of the Department's action to implement the decisions of the Board.

"(G) Any activity of the Board or of the organization described in paragraph (1), shall be subject to the provisions of this subsection.

"(7)(A) Not to exceed 10 percent of the funds available for this subsection may be used for administrative expenses (including staff, consultants and contracts authorized by the Board) and to carry out the functions described in paragraph (6)(A).

"(B) For the purposes of its administrative functions, the Board shall have the authorities authorized by the Federal Advisory Committee Act and shall be subject to the open meeting provisions of that law.

"(8)(A) Participation in the National and Regional Assessments by State and local educational agencies shall be voluntary.

"(B) Participation in assessments made on a State basis shall be voluntary. The Secretary shall enter into an agreement with any State which desires to carry out an assessment for the State under this subsection. Each such agreement shall contain provisions designed to assure—

Contracts.

"(i) that the State will participate in the assessment;

"(ii) that the State will pay from non-Federal sources the non-Federal share of participation; and

"(iii) that the State agrees with the terms and conditions specified in subsection (a)(2)(C)(iv).

"(C)(i) For each fiscal year, the non-Federal share for the purpose of clause (ii) of subparagraph (B) shall be the cost of conducting the assessment in the State including the cost of administering the assessment at the school level for all schools in the State sample and the cost of coordination within the State.

"(ii) The non-Federal share of payments under this paragraph may be in cash or in kind.

Reports.

"(9)(A) The Commissioner shall provide for continuing reviews of the National Assessment, including validation studies by the National Center for Education Statistics and solicitation of public comment on the conduct and usefulness of the National Assessment. The Secretary shall report to the Congress, the President, and the Nation on the findings and recommendations of such reviews. The Commissioner shall consider the findings and recommendations in designing the competition to select the organization through which the Office carries out the National Assessment.

"(B) The Commissioner shall, not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress Improvement Act, publish a report setting forth plans for the collection of data for the 1990 assessment and plans for including other subject areas in the 1992 and later assessments. The report shall include methods by which the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress may be reported so that the results are more readily available and more easily understood by educators, policymakers, and the general public, and methods by which items will be reviewed to identify and exclude items which reflect racial, cultural, gender, or regional bias. The report shall be developed after consultation with educators, State education officials, members of the Board appointed under paragraph (5), and the general public.

"(C) The report required by this paragraph shall be submitted to the Congress and made available to the public. The appropriate authorizing committees of the Congress may request the Secretary to modify the plan contained in the report. The Secretary shall take such actions as may be appropriate to carry out the recommendations contained in the report.".

Public information.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 405 of the Act is amended by striking out subsection (e) and by redesignating subsections (f) and (g) as subsections (e) and (f), respectively.

20 USC 1221e.

(c) RESERVATION OF FUNDS FOR ASSESSMENTS.—(1) Section 405(f)(1)(D) of the Act (as redesignated by subsection (b)(1)) is amended to read as follows:

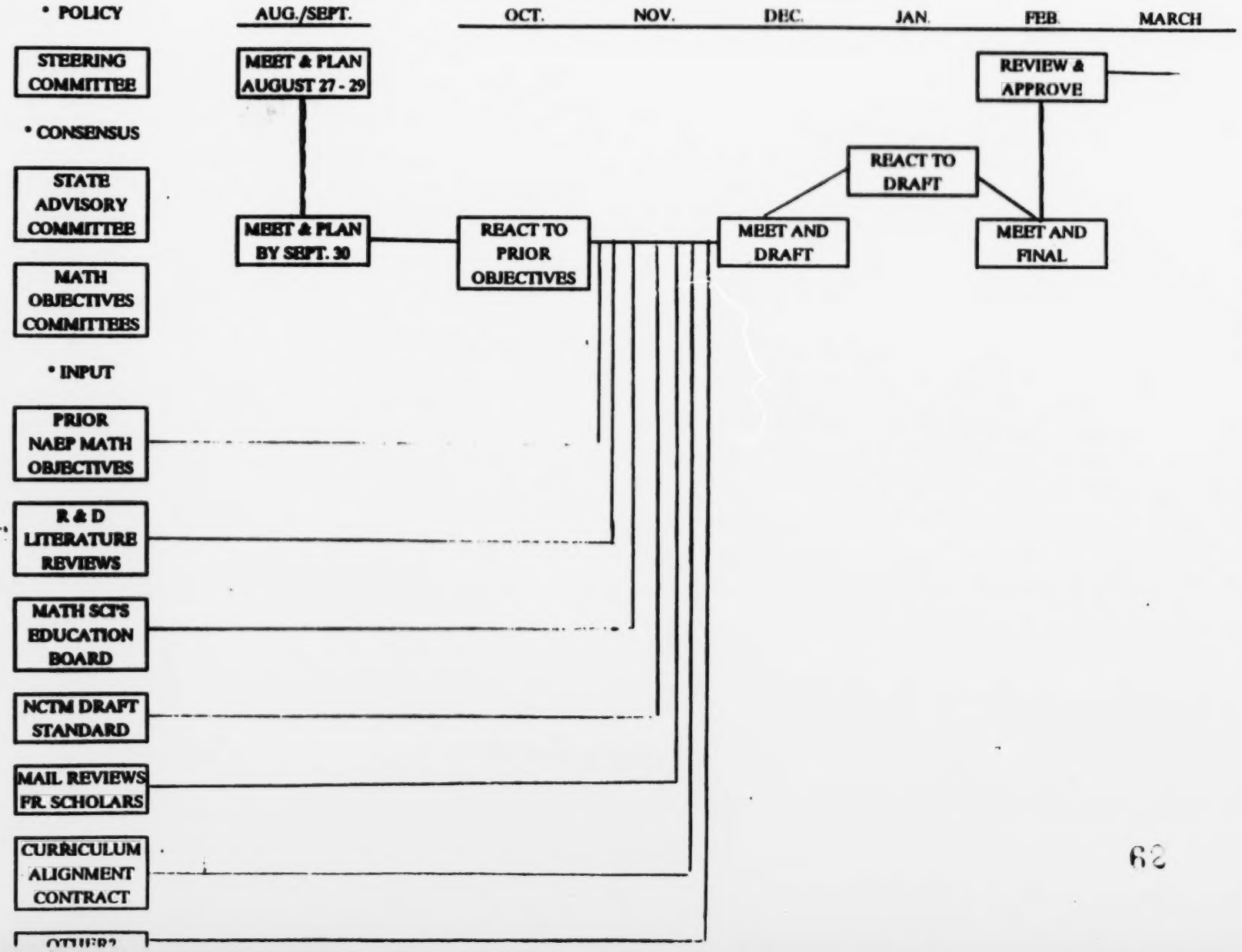
"(D) Not less than $9,500,000 for the fiscal year 1989, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 1990 through 1993, shall be available to carry out section 406(i) of this Act (relating to the National Assessment of Education Progress);".

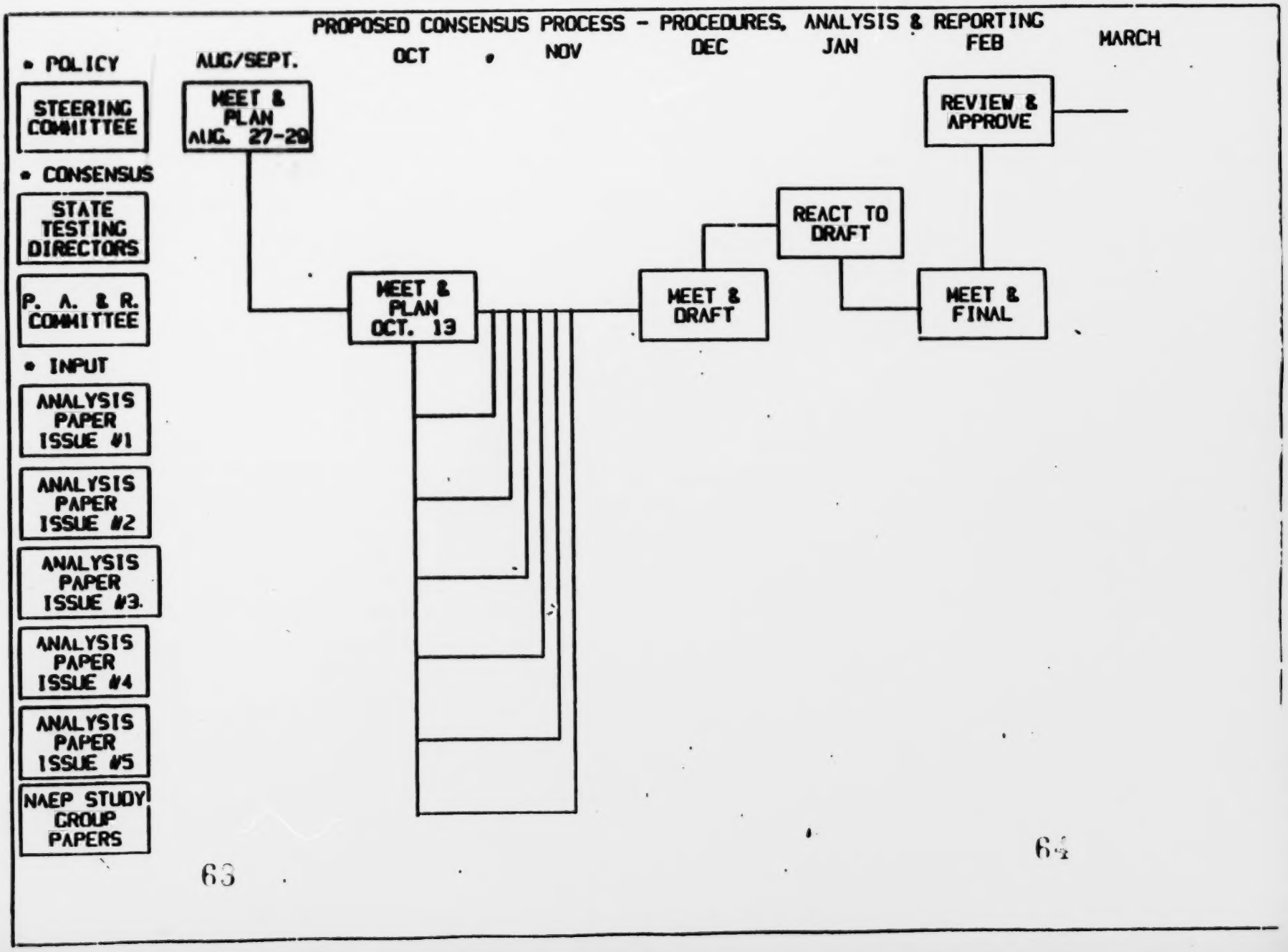
(2) Section 405(f)(1)(E) of the Act (as redesignated by subsection (a)(1)) is amended by inserting a comma and "except for subsection (i) of that section," immediately after "Act".

APPENDIX E

CONSENSUS PROCESS SCHEDULES; NAPP

PROPOSED CONCENSUS PROCESS - MATH OBJECTIVES




PROPOSED CONSENSUS PROCESS - PROCEDURES, ANALYSIS & REPORTING
AUG/SEPT.
OCT
NOV
DEC
JAN
FEB
MARCH
• POLICY
STEERING COMMITTEE
• CONSENSUS
STATE TESTING DIRECTORS
P. A. & R. COMMITTEE
• INPUT
ANALYSIS PAPER ISSUE #1
ANALYSIS PAPER ISSUE #2
ANALYSIS PAPER ISSUE #3.
ANALYSIS PAPER ISSUE #4
ANALYSIS PAPER ISSUE #5
NAEP STUDY GROUP PAPERS
MEET & PLAN AUG. 27-29
MEET & PLAN OCT. 13
MEET & DRAFT
REACT TO DRAFT
MEET & FINAL
REVIEW & APPROVE